



NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE • FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY
One Gifford Pinchot Drive • Madison, WI 53726-2398 • www.fpl.fs.fed.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 26, 2012

NR # 20120726

Contact: Rebecca Wallace, (608) 231-9275

E-mail: rwallace@fs.fed.us

Jakes Honored as Outstanding Early-Career Scientist by President Obama

MADISON, Wis. – President Obama has named Dr. Joseph Jakes of the U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) one of 96 researchers to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. This is the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their independent research careers.

Jakes, a research materials engineer at the FPL and a University of Wisconsin (UW) graduate, is one of three early career scientists from within the Department of Agriculture to garner the 2012 award. It is also the second year running that an FPL scientist has received such an honor. In 2011, Samuel Zelinka, also a research materials engineer at FPL, received the award.

“It is a great honor for me to receive this award,” says Jakes. “I am fortunate to work with many great researchers at the Forest Products Laboratory and to have the opportunity to absorb their wealth of knowledge.”

Even better, says Jakes, is the freedom he’s been given in the early years of his research career to pursue high-impact research areas. “It is very satisfying to identify important research problems, develop and execute the methodology to solve the problems, and finally disseminate the solutions to help others.”

Jakes’s expertise is in the development and employment of methodology to understand material properties at the smallest lengths possible, the nanoscale. In forest products research, his efforts are leading to improved wood adhesives and the development of new high-performance wood-based composite materials, including those utilizing nanocellulose. Ultimately, Jakes’s goal is the development of new and improved forest products that lead to the efficient utilization and management of forest resources.

“We are very proud of Joseph’s accomplishments, and all of FPL shares in the pride of this national honor,” said Greg Schueneman, supervisory research materials engineer at the FPL. “Joseph started at FPL as a student employee, under Prof. Don Stone at UW. He basically came of age at FPL, scientifically speaking, and has quickly risen to make an impact on the national and international stage.”

The Presidential early career awards embody the high priority the Obama Administration places on producing outstanding scientists and engineers to advance the Nation’s goals, tackle grand challenges, and contribute to the American economy.

“Discoveries in science and technology not only strengthen our economy, they inspire us as a people,” President Obama said. “The impressive accomplishments of today’s awardees so early in their careers promise even greater advances in the years ahead.”

For over 100 years, FPL’s work with academia, industry, and other government agencies has led to ground-breaking discoveries with great benefit to the public. Additional information on FPL’s research is available at www.fpl.fs.fed.us.

#